



Yoruba Janus-Headed Sceptre

The Yoruba sceptre of well-patinated brown wood displays the double axe above the Janus heads, suggesting Shango-cult origin of the piece. There is a hole at the bottom of the two axes, perhaps used for suspending decorations. There is evidence of indigo pigment on the faces; the handle is heavily incised in a variety of patterns and terminates with a half-ring opening.

16"

Probably early 20th c.

Purchased from the United Nations Gift Center, New York, on March 7, 1976, for \$170.

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| QUANTITY | DESCRIPTION | UNIT PRICE | TOTAL |
|----------|--------------------------------------|------------|-------|
| 1 | AFRICAN YORUBA SCEPTRE | | 170 - |
| | YORUBA | | |
| | NIGERIA | | |
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Cash ☐ Cheque ☐ TOTAL PAID.. 170 -

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Information for
Mr. David P. Harris

Janus-headed sceptre (V.G. - 100 HH). This small sculpture was cut by the Yoruba peoples in Nigeria, probably in the second quarter of the twentieth century. The patination is a natural one of long usage, as indicated by the loss of indigo pigment.

Because of the double axe above the head, this piece can be given to the Shango cult. Of all the Yoruba pantheon, he is the most powerful god. Shango and his spouse Oya could work miracles and were held in awe by the average person.

Of the three principal art forms of the Yoruba nation (Gelede masks, Ibeji twin figures and Shango cult figures), the latter are by far the rarest.

From the collection of
Sandford Griffith

Reference: The Art of Africa, by Elsy Leuzinger. Grey-stone Press, New York. N.D. Revised edition of 1967.